Looks and Books

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Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King
Genre: M/M
Language: English
Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris
Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough/Stanley Uris, Eddie Kaspbrak & Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier
Status: Completed
Published: 2017-10-26
Updated: 2017-10-26
Packaged: 2020-01-29 14:07:06
Rating: Teen And Up Audiences
Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Chapters: 1
Words: 9,426
Publisher: archiveofourown.org
Summary:

“I’m sick of you guys getting me into trouble all the time. I’m just - I’m sick of you guys.”

AU where Eddie attempts to find a new image for himself after he feels like he’s just being used by his own best friends.

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Author's Note:

> Hiiiii guys!!! I have a brand new Reddie one-shot for you! I seriously am obsessed with writing these, so I hope you continue to enjoy them. I do want you all to know that this is based off an episode of the show Freaks & Geeks. The episode I'm basing it off of is actually called "Looks & Books," which is why I also titled this story the same name. I definitely recommend watching the episode (or the whole season lol)
> Feedback is welcomed and appreciated! Enjoy! :)

“Eddie! Eds! Eddie Spaghetti!”

Eddie Kaspbrak rolled his eyes and finally stopped walking down his high school hallway, slowly turning around and seeing none other than his best friend, Richie Tozier come bounding down after him.

“Stop calling me those stupid nicknames. My name is Eddie and that’s it,” he huffed, though he couldn’t help but slightly smile at Richie’s grinning face.

“Aw, but I love my little Eds. I know you do too. Don’t lie,” Richie teased while pinching Eddie’s cheek.

Eddie shoved his hand away and rolled his eyes.

”What do you want, Trashmouth? Class starts in a few minutes. I can’t be late. I have a test.”

Eddie turned and continued down the hall and Richie easily followed, throwing an arm around Eddie’s shoulders and pulling him in close.

Eddie flushed at the close contact.

“What? Can’t a boy simply talk to his cute best friend?”

Once again, Eddie felt his cheeks redden from the “cute” comment.

”Don’t call me cute,” he argued weakly.

”I’m just stating facts, Eds. Nothing wrong with that,” Richie stated in his usual chipper voice.

Eddie chuckled and stared up at his best friend. Richie turned his downwards and made eye contact with him.

”So, I have a great idea,” Richie suddenly said, grinning down at Edddie.

Eddie groaned.

”No. I don’t even wanna hear it. I know how you and your so called ‘great ideas’ are. They always involve you getting me sucked into some trouble and then we both have to suffer the consequences. Well, no. Not happening. Not this time.”

Richie cackled at Eddie’s suddenly switch in attitude.

”Eds, you don’t even want to hear what I have to say? What if I had the best news you could ever receive? You could be missing out on some awesome news,” Richie said.

Eddie snorted.

”Yeah, right. What could possibly be so awesome, Richie? Enlighten me. Please.”

Richie grinned and stared down at Eddie with a mischievous look in his eyes.

”What if I told you that I may have gotten us two tickets to a special screening of The Goonies tonight? In 3D!” Richie exclaimed excitedly.

Eddie stopped and he felt his own eyes widen.

”Wait, seriously? Please be serious. Richie, if this is a fucking joke, I swear I will kill -“

”I’m being 100%, I swear. Cross my heart,” Richie said while drawing an imaginary ‘X’ on his heart.

Eddie felt a smile grow on his own face. He suddenly launched himself at Richie, throwing his arms around the lanky boy's neck and hugging him tightly.

"Oh my gosh! That's so awesome! I'm so excited!" Eddie squealed in delight.

Richie laughed at his enthusiasm and wrapped his arms around Eddie's waist in return.

"See? Didn't I say it would be awesome news?" Richie teased.

Eddie loosened his grip from Richie's neck and pulled back to look up at his best friend.

"How did you get those tickets? Weren't they sold out?"

"Trust me, I have my ways," Richie said while waggling his eyebrows.

Eddie scrunched his nose up in disgust.

"Ew, okay. Forget I asked."

Richie only cackled in return.

"So, anyways. I figured you and I could grab some dinner before the movie. I'll pay and everything, like a real gentleman. There's only one teeny tiny problem," he said while avoiding eye contact with Eddie.

Eddie's smile instantly dropped and he narrowed his eyes at Richie.

He pulled back from their hug and crossed his arms.

"What's the problem?" He softly asked. "Is everything okay?"

Richie's face softened.

"Yeah! Yeah, everything's great. I just, uh....my truck is kind of....crashed?" He finished lamely.

Eddie's eyebrows scrunched together and he titled his head in

confusion.

”Crashed? What do you mean, crashed? Did you get into a car accident? Oh my god, why didn’t you tell me about this? Are you alright? Does anything hurt? Do I need to -“

”Eds! I’m fine! I didn’t crash it. My mom got super drunk last night and somehow got ahold of my keys while I was in the shower and took my truck since my dad was out with her car. She accidentally hit a parked car at some little supermarket. She ran into pretty fucking hard, because my truck is totaled. I’ll have to wait for a while since it’s in the shop now,” Richie gravely explained.

He sighed and rolled his eyes.

”Leave it to my mom to destroy everything I love one by one,” he said quietly.

Eddie’s eyes softened and he put his hand on Richie’s arm in comfort.

“I’m so sorry, Richie. That really sucks. I know how much you love that stinky truck,” Eddie teased to try to lighten the mood.

Richie chuckled and rubbed a hand through his wild curls.

”Yeah. She is something else, that’s for sure.”

Eddie rolled his eyes but giggled at the fact that Richie referred to his truck as a “she.”

”So, why don’t we just take a bus? Or ride our bikes? No big deal,” Eddie said with a slight grin and a shrug of his shoulders.

Richie stared at him for a few seconds before sighing obnoxiously loud and rolling his eyes.

”No way. We are not taking a bus that’s always filled with weirdos and creeps, and we are definitely not riding our bikes across town. That’s lame,” Richie said as a matter of factly.

Eddie gaped.

”I love riding my bike, and you know that! It’s not lame,” he grumbled.

Richie chuckled and ruffled Eddie’s hair, causing the shorter boy to smack his hand away.

“Eds, you’re too cute. Anyways, I have a favor to ask you. Why don’t we take your mom’s car?”

Eddie was silent for a few moments as he simply stared Richie down.

”You’re so funny, Richie. Seriously, keep it up. I’m dying from my laughter,” Eddie deadpanned.

Richie continued to stare right back down at Eddie silently. Eddie then realized that Richie was being completely serious.

”Richie! Have you lost your mind? You know we can’t take my mother’s car! She would find out and kill me! Then kill you! Then bring us back to life and kill us again! No way, Richie. Nope. That’s not gonna happen and you know it.”

Eddie immediately took off in the direction of his class again but Richie still followed, grabbing Eddie’s wrist.

”Oh, come on Eds! It’s just for one night. Live a little. I promise I’ll help you come up with a great excuse as to why you need to borrow the car tonight. Technically, you won’t even be sneaking it out since you’ll be asking to borrow it!”

”She’ll never say yes, Richie.”

Richie only grinned slyly in return.

”Believe me, Eddie Spaghetti. I know just the plan.”

“I can’t believe she actually said yes. We actually convinced my mom to let me borrow her car for the night. What is my life right now? I must be in the twilight zone,” Eddie said in a daze as he climbed into the driver’s seat of his mother’s Volkswagen.

Richie, who had been leaning against the passenger side, twirling the keys on one finger, stepped in and handed the set of keys to Eddie.

”What did I tell you? I had a master plan. It worked. Just like I said it would,” Richie said as he grinned triumphantly.

Eddie grinned in return and started the car.

“Yeah. I just can’t believe she actually believed us. I mean, seriously? You literally told her that you wanted to take me to a local class all about the dangers of germs and bacteria. That is such a lame plan. But my mother is crazy for actually believing it,” Eddie said.

He began laughing at the extremity of it all, and a few seconds later, Richie joined in.

Richie turned the radio on, and settled for the Alternative station.

They drove in comfortable silence for a while, reaching their first destination not much further ahead.

It was a little diner called, “Freddy’s”. It was always a favorite for Richie and Eddie. They went there together all the time. Sometimes, they would get meals. But other times, they would come simply for their amazing milkshakes only.

They stepped out of the car and made their way in together, their hands dangling at their sides, brushing each other’s gently every few seconds.

Once they were in and seated, Richie quickly began scanning through the menu, causing Eddie to snort.

”Richie, you look through the menu every time but always end up getting their chicken tender plate. Why bother?”

Richie grinned and shrugged his shoulders.

”Just seeing if they have anything else that sounds good, that’s all,” he said before sticking out his tongue at Eddie.

However, a few seconds later, he shook his head and closed the

menu.

”Chicken tenders, it is,” he concluded with a lazy grin.

Eddie chuckled and shook his head. He didn’t even need to open the menu. He knew what he wanted already. Like Richie, he got the exact same plate every time. However, not chicken tenders, but Spaghetti and Meatballs.

An older woman arrived at their table and asked for their order.

”The chicken tender plate for me, and the spaghetti and meatballs for my beautiful date over here,” Richie said while gesturing in Eddie’s direction.

Eddie completely flushed at the comment and stared down in his lap.

The waitress nodded her head and quickly wrote down their orders, before gathering their menus and leaving.

“Date? Is that what you would call this?” Eddie asked.

Richie shrugged one shoulder and stared down at his hands, which were resting on the table. Eddie could’ve sworn he saw a light blush dust across Richie’s cheeks.

”I mean, duh,” he said simply.

Eddie blushed again, but couldn’t hold back a smile anymore.

“Well, if that’s the case, I’m paying for the popcorn at the movie,” he said playfully, even though he completely meant that.

Richie grinned again and nodded.

”You've got yourself a deal, Kaspbrak.”

Eddie and Richie stumbled out of the theater, both giggling wildly. The two of them had random pieces of popcorn in their clothes and

hair.

Normally, Eddie would be complaining right now, but he had too great of a night to even care that pieces of nasty, buttery popcorn were stuck in his hair.

Like he promised, Eddie bought some popcorn in the biggest tub the theater offered, and of course, like the child he is, Richie decided halfway through the movie, that flicking and throwing the popcorn at Eddie was more fun than eating it.

Eddie had ignored it at first, simply swatting the food off of himself while he continued to pay attention to the movie.

But after a while, he couldn't help but chuckle every time he felt a piece of popcorn hit his face or chest.

He eventually gave up on paying attention to the movie and began throwing popcorn right back at Richie. Richie's hair was an easy target, since his wild curls seemed to let anything and everything stick to them. In just a few minutes, Richie's hair was covered with popcorn and Eddie couldn't hold back the laughter that bubbled out of him at the sight.

They gained glares from lots of the other viewers, but Eddie and Richie paid no attention to them.

Now, as they walked out of the theater together, their arms linked as they giggled and shook popcorn out of their hair, Eddie is more than happy that he agreed to this "date". He secretly hoped that it was a date.

Suddenly, a female voice called out to the two of them. Eddie and Richie turned and noticed Bev jogging in their direction and waving at them.

"Hey guys! What's up?"

Eddie and Richie grinned at the beautiful girl.

"I took my sweet Eds here to a special showing of The Goonies. It quickly turned into a popcorn match, which I easily won."

Eddie spluttered.

”No way! Your entire head was covered with popcorn, you hardly got any stuck on me,” Eddie explained while jokingly shoving Richie.

Bev simply grinned at them, amused at how cute the two of her friends were when they were together.

“So what are you doing around here tonight, Bev?”

”I didn’t feel like being at home tonight, so I took a walk. I ended up at the shops right here, so I ended up just looking around for a while,” she explained while gesturing at the numerous clothing stores that surrounded each side of the massive theater.

Eddie felt bad for the poor girl.

”So, you don’t have a ride home? You walked all the way over here?”

Bev shrugged her shoulders and nodded.

”Yeah, I do that a lot when I need some time for myself to think,” she said quietly.

”Well, Eddie and I will give you a ride home,” Richie suggested.

Eddie quickly turned his head and looked at Richie in disbelief.

He was planning on calling a taxi for Bev and waiting until that taxi arrived until he and Richie left.

He loved Beverly, but he wasn’t even supposed to be here right now with his mother’s car, let alone giving free rides to his friends. His mother would kill him if he stayed out too long with her car.

”Wait, wait. I meant I would call a taxi,” Eddie loudly exclaimed. “We’ll wait with you, of course,” he quickly said to Bev.

Richie rolled his eyes.

”Eds, calm down. It’s just one ride. She doesn’t even live that far from here,” Richie tried to reason.

Bev quickly nodded.

“Yeah, I’m only about ten minutes from here by car. Besides, taxi cars hardly ever pass through this area,” Bev said with a slight grin.

Eddie huffed and covered pinched the bridge of his nose.

”Guys, I am borrowing my mom’s car. She will kill me if she finds out I’m using her car to go to the movies and out to dinner and to give people rides home,” Eddie quickly ranted.

”Bev isn’t just a person. She’s our friend. Come on, what your mom doesn’t know won’t hurt her,” Richie said with a smirk.

Eddie narrowed his eyes at Richie.

”Easy for you to say, Richie,” he spat at him.

”Eddie, come on. It’s just one ride home. You know I or any of the other losers for that matter would do the same for you if you really needed a ride home,” Bev said with her eyebrows raised.

Eddie glanced back and forth between his two friends, and shook his head.

”You guys cannot convince me to do this. No way. Nope. Not this time,” he said while pointing at the two of them in an accusatory manner.

“Whoa, Eds, slow down there. I think you’re speeding a bit, sir,” Richie teased with a smirk, from his place in the passenger seat.

Eddie shook his head and glared as he continued staring at the road.

”Don’t care. I’m getting Bev home as fast as I can, before my mom starts freaking out,” he said while he continued going about ten miles over the speed limit.

”Eddie, please calm down,” Bev said with a chuckle. “Your mom isn’t

going to freak. It's only 11."

"Exactly! It's 11! I told her I wouldn't be any later than 10:30. She's probably already having an aneurysm!"

Bev softly sighed and leaned back into her seat in the back of the car.

Richie turned the radio on and stopped on some hard rock song that Eddie vaguely recognized.

"Fuck! I love this song!" Richie said while turning the radio up obscenely loud.

He began shouting the lyrics at the top of his lungs, and Bev quickly joined in from her place in the back.

Eddie quickly cringed at all the noise.

"Could you guys be quiet, please? I can't focus!" Eddie shouted over the music.

Richie rolled his eyes.

"Ever so dramatic, Eddie! Come on, just relax!" He said with a huge grin. He rolled down his window, and stuck his head out, allowing the strong wind to blow across his face.

Eddie glanced at his best friend, and couldn't help but softly smile at him looking so relaxed and happy.

He stopped badgering his two friends and just tried to focus the best he could through the sound of the loud music and the sound of Richie and Bev's even louder voices.

Suddenly, Richie started pointing out Eddie's window, blocking Eddie's view. Eddie quickly smacked Richie's hand out of the way.

"Look! Look, Eds. Look at the river. It's so beautiful!" Richie shouted in excitement.

Eddie quickly glanced to his left and saw the river. The moonlight

from above was reflecting off the river and made the entire body of water sparkle and shimmer. Eddie had to admit that it was definitely gorgeous.

Eddie only had his eyes off the road for a few seconds, he swears. But unfortunately, those few seconds caused Eddie to completely miss the fact that there was a car backing out of their driveway only a few feet ahead, not bothering to slow down.

”Eddie! Eddie, look out!”

Eddie suddenly snapped his eyes forwards, but it was too late. His mother’s Volkswagen smashed right into the right rear side of the car backing out of their driveway.

It wasn’t too hard of a hit. But it was enough for the three losers to fly forwards a bit in their seats, but were luckily held back by their seatbelts.

Eddie was in complete shock. He didn’t even know what was going on. He had his eyes on the steering wheel and when he slowly looked up and ahead, he saw the damage.

He saw the car he hit. The right rear side was completely totaled beyond repair. The door was smashed in completely and the window was shattered, glass littering the ground around them.

“Oh my god, are you guys okay?” Richie asked frantically.

Bev mumbled “yes,” from the back and Richie quickly turned his attention on Eddie.

”Eds, are you alright? Are you okay? Eddie!”

But Eddie was completely on auto pilot. He couldn’t feel anything. He numbly stepped out of the car, and took slow, heavy steps to the front of it.

The sight of his mother’s car made his knees buckle and he almost dropped to the ground but he managed to put one hand on the hood of the car and leaned on it.

A middle aged woman stepped out of the other car and frantically walked to the back of her car.

”Oh my god! What the hell just happened? Were you even paying attention to the road? How did you not see me backing out? Are you kidding me right now?!” The woman screeched as she stared Eddie down in complete rage.

“I-I am so sorry, ma’am. I don’t know w-wh-what happened. I am so, so, sorry.”

Eddie felt like he couldn’t breathe right now.

He heard Bev and Richie both step out of the car and quickly join Eddie on either side of him.

”I sure hope you’re sorry!”

Suddenly, a middle aged man came jogging out of the house to see what all the commotion was about.

“What the fuck?” The man shouted.

The woman turned at the sound of the man’s voice.

”Babe, get the police on the phone! Hurry,” she shouted.

Suddenly, Beverly stepped forwards.

”Wait, wait, hold on. The police?! I highly doubt that’s necessary, ma’am. I mean, with all due respect, it was an accident!” Beverly said.

The woman shook her head quickly.

“You all will pay for every cent worth of damage on my car, you hear me?” She shouted.

”Loud and clear,” Richie said sarcastically. “Although, haven’t you heard of something called, oh I don’t know, insurance?” He said while glaring at her.

”Knock it off!” Eddie suddenly shouted. “Just shut the fuck up! Both of you! You two dragged me into this, so just shut up and get in the car!” Eddie screamed.

Richie suddenly turned his head and narrowed his eyes at Eddie.

”Don’t put the blame on us, Eddie! We didn’t drag you into anything,” he said.

”Yes you did, Richie! You’re the one who got me to lie to my mother so we could take the car! You’re the one who just had to make sure we gave Bev a ride home! And now you’re the one who caused me to crash my mother’s car because you can’t ever act like a normal fucking human being for more than five seconds!” Eddie screamed in rage.

Richie glared at him for a few moments in silence, before finally huffing and walking back to the car, Bev slowly following him.

Eddie closed his eyes and sighed slowly and loudly.

”I promise you, I will fix this. I’m so sorry,” Eddie said genuinely, hoping he could get his point across.

He glanced back up at the woman, who was now staring at him with a much softer look.

“Look, kid. I understand, accidents happen. I won’t call the cops. We’ll let Insurance handle it.”

Eddie breathed a sigh of relief and thanked her over and over again.

The woman gave him a half smile, before glancing at Richie and Bev who were silently sitting in the car. Eddie noticed her features harden as she stared at them.

”Kid, I only have one thing to say to you.”

Eddie stared at her with questioning eyes.

“What?”

She continued staring at Richie and Bev for a few more seconds, before finally moving her eyes back to Eddie's.

"Get yourself some new friends. You shouldn't be feeling peer pressured into doing things you don't want to be doing," she firmly said before turning around and walking back to her front door of the house, mumbling something about getting her insurance information to bring back out for him.

Eddie could only silently watch her as she left him to his own thoughts for a few moments.

Silence seemed to tick on an on, as Eddie and his mother sat at the dinner table together. It was already way past midnight. Luckily, it was Friday night, so he wouldn't have to be worrying about school in the morning.

His mother's car was pretty damaged, but it could still be driven. Once he got into the driveway, he took about twenty minutes to actually get out of the car and face his mother.

The second he walked in, she was shouting in his face, letting him know how worried sick she was for him. After what felt like forever of her lecturing him, she finally asked the one question Eddie did not want to answer.

"Is my car okay?"

She had no idea what happened to her car. Eddie had been silent when she asked, so she asked again, more firm this time and when he still didn't answer, she whipped past him and outside.

He heard her scream and gasp as she took in the sight of her car.

Eddie had sat himself down at the dinner table and when she finally came back inside, she joined him, not saying a word.

Now, here they were. Still sitting at the table as minute after minute passed with neither of them speaking up.

Eddie shuddered out a shaky breath.

“Mommy, I am so, so sorr-“

”I could call the police on you, you know?” His mother cut in, her voice low with venom.

Eddie quickly snapped his mouth shut and nodded his head.

”I know,” he whispered.

”I could call the police and report my own son for ruining my car,” she said, this time a little louder. “You’re grounded. I can’t even tell you how long. Just know that you won’t be hanging out with any of those friends of yours for a very long time,” she said.

Eddie knew she wouldn’t even let him explain himself. He knew that he wouldn’t even be able to tell her that it was Richie and Bev who got him into the whole mess. He felt himself begin shaking with anger again.

“Go to bed, right now,” his mother said.

Eddie quickly stood, but before walking away, he slowly reached a hand out and put it on his mother’s shoulder.

”I really am sorry, mother,” he softly whispered.

But his mom simply shook her head.

”I don’t believe anything you say anymore.”

Eddie felt tears begin falling out of his eyes at the comment his mother just said to him.

He slowly turned away and made his way up to his room.

He thought back to that woman’s words on his way up.

Maybe he did need some new friends.

The weekend passed by slowly and terribly.

Surprisingly, Eddie's mother didn't take his phone from him. But he knew it didn't matter if she had taken it or not.

The losers were the only ones who ever texted him, but for the first time, he didn't feel like talking to any of them.

He knew not all of them did anything. Bill, Stan, Mike, and Ben had nothing to with what happened. But Eddie figured that Bev and Richie would be hanging out with them this weekend, so that made Eddie automatically not want to be with any of them.

It was currently Sunday afternoon. Eddie had been spending the weekend reading his old comics so far. He didn't have much else to do. He didn't feel like doing any homework. His phone had buzzed over and over again. Texts from Bev, asking him if everything was okay. Texts from the other losers, asking him to tell them what happened, but mostly, he had texts from Richie, who kept sending him all kinds of texts. Some were questions, some were jokes and some were just telling Eddie to text him back.

But Eddie didn't respond to a single text from anyone. He was happy they didn't bother stopping by either. He figured that they assumed he was in way too much trouble to have his friends over.

Eddie sighed to himself.

He loved Richie. He really did. That kid has been his best friend for ages. He knew that deep down, he had strong feelings for the boy. He didn't know if it was love, but he knew that they were definitely not feelings he should be having towards his best friend, who was also a guy.

Eddie almost felt like his feelings for the boy were what caused him to go along with everything Richie wanted to do. No matter what, he was constantly agreeing to whatever Richie wanted, no matter how scary or dangerous it sounded.

Eddie didn't think with his brain when he was around Richie. He simply acts on impulse around the boy, inspired by his strong

feelings.

He realized now, that he needed to stop now. Who knows if Richie is even a good friend? I mean, hell, the boy was constantly using Eddie to get into trouble with. He almost always had something he shouldn't be doing up his sleeve and he always had to drag Eddie into them with him.

Eddie shook his head. Because he had been stupid enough to agree to go along with any of Richie's plans on Friday night, he ended up with a crashed car and a screaming middle aged couple in his face.

Well, enough is enough. Eddie quickly realized that Richie wasn't a true friend at all. He didn't take Eddie seriously. He just uses him because he probably knows he has Eddie wrapped around his finger.

Eddie felt himself become more and more angry.

That's it.

No more Richie Tozier in his life.

Monday morning came around and Eddie actually felt a lot lighter and happier than usual walking into the halls of his high school.

He had a new goal in mind.

He needed to make some new friends.

He smiled to himself at the thought and made his way down the hall to his locker. As he passed one of the classrooms, he stopped and glanced inside.

The Mathletes team was currently having a meeting. Eddie sighed softly as he watched them.

He used to be involved in the mathletes, back when he was a freshman in high school. Many people don't realize that he's actually a whiz kid when it comes to math. He was the captain of the Mathletes at one point, but he quickly quit at the start of his sophomore year when he realized it was doing absolutely nothing to

help his low social status. In fact, it was worsening it. He was made fun of constantly for being on the team.

However, now, being a junior in high school, and being just as good in math, he realized that he actually missed being on the team.

Right when this thought passed through his head, the advisor of the team, Mr. Russo seemed to notice someone staring in on their meeting. His eyes lit up when he noticed Eddie.

He quickly stood up and excused himself from the group. He walked over to the door and smiled down at Eddie.

”Hello, Eddie! How are you?” He said cheerfully.

Eddie felt a rush of affection towards the teacher. He completely let him down when he quit the team, but Mr. Russo never treated him badly because of it. Eddie felt extremely grateful to have a teacher like him in his life.

”I’m good. Uh, great. Actually. How are you?”

”I’m doing just fine, Mr. Kaspbrak! So, I couldn’t help but notice you looking in on our practice. Now, I don’t want to jump the gun or anything, but, are you maybe looking into re-joining? We’d be happy to take you back. You’re one of our best members. Not to mention, you’re our best long divider.”

Eddie chuckled.

He was silent for a few moments as he pondered his options.

If he re-joined, he could talk to the boys he once considered to be good friends of his. They were all super nerdy, but they were nice and they always treated Eddie well. Just like real friends should treat each other. He suddenly grinned up at Mr. Russo who was waiting patiently for an answer.

“I do really miss it,” he said honestly. “Maybe I could come to one of your next meetings or practices?”

Mr. Russo clapped his hands together in delight and grinned ear to

ear.

“Of course! We have a practice today after school if you’re interested in coming to that one! Also, the Mathletes are having their State Finals competition this weekend. We could maybe even squeeze you in for that,” Mr. Russo explained.

Eddie’s eyes lit up and he quickly nodded his head. His mother wouldn’t mind him staying after school for a Mathletes practice. She would probably even be happy he was finally hanging out with kids other than the losers.

“I’ll be at that practice this afternoon, Mr. Russo,” he confirmed with a nod of the head.

Mr. Russo grinned again and gave him a thumbs up. Suddenly, his eyes widened slightly and he held up a “wait, one moment” finger before dashing into the classroom and grabbing something from one of the drawers in the back.

He came back to Eddie, holding a “Mathletes” T-shirt out towards Eddie.

Eddie grinned in delight.

Anyone who wears one of these shirts immediately gets laughed at and made fun of in the halls, but Eddie couldn’t care less right now. He was happy to finally feel like he had a real sense of belonging again. He felt excited to finally be invited back to a group who appreciated him and accepted him for his abnormally superior math skills.

Eddie grabbed the shirt and waved goodbye to Mr. Russo who simply nodded and closed the door, returning back to the meeting.

Eddie stared down at the shirt, when he suddenly heard loud laughter and giggles behind him. Eddie froze at the sound. The voices were the last ones he wanted to hear.

Richie and Bev came walking up to him with huge smiles on their faces.

”What do you have there, Eds? Is that a Mathletes shirt? Don’t tell me you’re nerding out on us again” Richie said loudly while he kept laughing.

Bev joined in on the giggles, but quickly stopped when she took in just how serious Eddie was.

Eddie suddenly realized that the two of them reeked of cigarette smoke and he scrunched his nose up in disgust and turned around to walk away from them.

”So, how did things go with your mom?” Bev casually asked.

Eddie’s blood boiled. He turned towards them and plastered an extremely fake cheerful smile on his face.

”Oh, it went perfectly swell! Thanks for asking. I came home and let her know what happened and she forgave me right away and then we proceeded to laugh about it over tea,” he deadpanned.

Bev and Richie both grinned at his sarcasm. But Eddie didn’t grin in the slightest back.

“Hey! Well, if it makes you feel any better, we’re all going to the barrens after school today,” Richie said excitedly.

Eddie glared.

”No. No, it doesn’t make me feel any better. You know why? Because now I’m grounded for who knows how long, so I’ll never be able to go to the stupid barrens again,” Eddie said harshly.

Richie just smirked in return.

“Why don’t you just sneak out? Your mother wouldn’t mind. Unless, I need to come up with another great excuse to get you outta that house. Last night’s excuse worked like a charm!”

Eddie quickly felt his own face getting hot and red out of anger.

”Go to hell, Richie!” Eddie spat, as he stepped closer to Richie, feeling his anger from the past weekend come flooding back

Beverly quickly chided in, putting her hand between the two of them to separate them. Richie was no longer smiling, but he still didn't seem to be taking Eddie seriously.

"Gosh, Eddie. Just calm down. What happened was an accident and we -"

"Stop talking, Bev!" Eddie suddenly shouted, effectively cutting her off.

"I'm sick of you guys getting me in trouble all the time. I'm just - I'm just sick of you guys," he finished before turning to walk away again.

"Bev, I thought girls only had periods. I guess Eddie proved us wrong," Richie joked, causing Eddie to freeze once again in the hall.

He turned back towards Richie quickly.

"Yeah! Wow. That must be it! I'm on my period! You figured it out! Congratulations!" He shouted sarcastically, causing tons of students to give him odd looks as they walked by him.

Richie's eyes narrowed.

"Eddie, it was just a joke," he said quietly.

"Oh! My mistake! I thought you were being serious. Silly me," Eddie replied, his eyes glaring at Richie harder than he's ever glared at anyone before in his entire life.

He turned and began walking away but Richie and Bev quickly followed, finally noticing how upset Eddie really was.

"What the hell is up with you, Eds? We said we were sorry!"

"You're what's up, Richie! Both of you! I'm sick of you guys using me! I'm done with it! You both are selfish and mean! Just because you two like to skip class and spend the day smoking like actual losers, stop assuming that I'm going to do the same," he finished.

He continued walking, not bothering to look back once.

This time, neither of his two “friends” followed him.

“What the fuck is up with Eddie today? What the hell was that little explosion about today?” Richie ranted to the rest of the losers at lunch that day.

”I mean,” he continued. “That kid said me and Bev were actual losers. We pretty much just implied we have nothing going for our lives. Who is he to say that? I have plenty of plans! He’s the one who doesn’t have anything going!” Richie complained.

Stan rolled his eyes.

”Look, Eddie’s pissed at what you two got him into! And he has every right to be. What you two did was wrong. He literally crashed his mother’s car all because you kept distracting the poor boy,” Stan snapped.

Richie glared at Stan.

”It was an accident, okay? How many fucking times do I have to say that?” Richie said loudly.

Bill shook his head.

”Well, sometimes, i-it takes more t-than just admitting i-it was an accident t-to get s-someone to forgive y-you.”

Ben and Mike both nodded their heads in agreement.

“Well, he didn’t have to be so rude to us about it,” Bev grumbled.

“I hate to say it, but you had it coming,” Ben said as he patted her shoulder.

Beverly sighed and slowly nodded.

“Well, I’m going to be a fashion designer or something,” she suddenly blurted. “Eddie may not think I have much going for me, but he

doesn't know how talented I am with clothes! I'm going to be a super famous fashion designer! Everyone will know my name!" She said proudly.

Richie nodded and joined in.

"Yeah! And I'm gonna be famous. I'm gonna take off to LA or New York and make a name out of myself. You'll be seeing my face on every billboard around the country. Eddie will just have to wait and see."

The rest of the losers stared at Bev and Richie like they were crazy.

"What?" Richie and Bev snapped at the same time.

The losers slowly went back to focusing on their own food.

They began normal conversation when they suddenly noticed Eddie enter the cafeteria.

Mike smiled at Eddie and waved him over before glaring at Richie and Bev.

"Behave," he warned to the two of them.

Bill, Stan, and Ben all smiled in Eddie's direction too but to everyone surprise, Eddie walked right past their table without a glance in their direction.

Even crazier, he was wearing his Mathletes shirt, which none of the losers had seen on him in almost two years.

They all watched as Eddie stopped at the table where all the other Mathletes sat. They watched as Eddie asked them if he could sit with them, and they watched as all the Mathletes smiled and enthusiastically accepted him to the table.

"Oh, you've gotta be kidding me. When did Eddie somehow become even more dramatic than a drama queen?" Richie said while snorting.

"Shut up, Richie! You seriously hurt him," Stan said angrily.

Bill sighed softly.

”Let’s j-just leave him a-alone for t-today. Maybe he’ll s-sit with us t-tomorrow.”

Turns out the losers were way wrong. Because it was already Friday and Eddie never returned to their lunch table. He actually seemed to be enjoying his time with the Mathletes a lot.

All the losers were pretty hurt by losing one of their best friends.

It was taking a heavy toll on Richie especially.

As each day passed, Richie looked more and more emotionally drained.

The rest of the losers noticed how anytime Eddie passed them in the hall, Richie would stare after him longingly. They all noticed how Richie would just sit silently at lunch as he watched Eddie laugh and crack jokes with the Mathletes. They noticed the pain in Richie’s eyes as he watched his own best friend be happy with other people.

Eddie still hadn’t spoken a word to Richie since he blew up on Monday. It was killing Richie.

He loved Eddie with everything in him. He couldn’t stand being apart from the boy. The absence of Eddie has made Richie realize one startling fact.

He was so in love with the small, hypochondriac boy.

His heart ached every time he watched Eddie laugh and smiled with someone else. He wanted to be the only to get that reaction out of Eddie. He hated seeing others be able to do it.

He sadly realized how strong his feeling were for Eddie when he was being completely ignored by the boy. By the looks of it, Eddie seemed better off without him. That thought alone has been making Richie cry into his pillow almost every night before bed.

He loved Eddie so much, it hurts.

He loved his smile, his bright and big brown eyes, his gorgeous hair, his cute freckles, but most of all, he loved how much Eddie genuinely cared about him.

Richie knew that even though Eddie constantly snapped at him, he truly cared about Richie and would do anything for him in a heartbeat.

Richie would do anything for Eddie too. But sadly, Eddie won't even look in his direction anymore.

Right now, as Richie sat at the lunch table with the other losers and stared in Eddie's direction, he suddenly sprung up and walked out of the cafeteria, ignoring the calls from his fellow friends.

He felt too sad right now. He just wanted to be on his own. The only person he wanted to talk to, to hug, to kiss, was someone who wanted nothing to do with him. That thought crushed Richie's heart.

He found himself in the boy's restroom, and luckily it was empty because suddenly, he felt huge sobs wracking his body as he dropped to the ground and covered his face with his hands.

He cried and cried, letting all his frustration, anger, and sadness come out all at once.

He cried for what felt like hours, finally subsiding to gentle sniffles and whimpers.

When he finally stood back up, he walked to the sink and splashed his face with water.

He dried his face off with his shirt, and ignored his puffy and red eyes.

He opened the bathroom door, and walked out but as soon as he turned the corner, he collided with another body.

The feeling knocked him back a few seconds and he stared at the other person in shock, before freezing when he noticed who was staring right back at him, mirroring the exact same shocked facial expression as he was.

Eddie stood a few feet across from him, his mouth dropped open and his eyes wide.

Richie could've sworn he saw a flash of sadness shoot through Eddie's eyes before he quickly replaced it with an emotionless look.

"Eddie," Richie finally said, his voice raspy from the crying he was just doing.

Eddie just stared at him for a few more seconds silently before he turned to walk around Richie.

However, Richie quickly reached out and put a hand on Eddie's shoulder gently, blocking him from going any further.

"Stop, Richie," Eddie whispered, his voice cracking.

Richie's heart broke in that moment.

He put both of his hands on either side of Eddie's face and stared intently into his eyes, trying to show Eddie how sorry he was for fucking up big time.

"Eddie, please listen to me for thirty seconds. That's it. Just thirty seconds. After thirty seconds, I'll stop bothering you for good if that's what you still want."

Eddie stared at him, his eyes shining with tears but he finally nodded once.

"Eddie, I am so sorry for making you crash your mother's car. I'm such a stupid and awful friend for making you do that. I just - all I strive to do every day is make you happy. That's all I ever want to do. I love you, Eddie. Seeing you smile or laugh makes me feel so happy inside, you have no idea. Sometimes, I want to make you happy so bad that it makes me start making stupid decisions. I'm sorry. I just.....I'm sorry. You mean everything and more to me. I just want you to know that. I'd do anything for you, Eds. Anything. You name it and I'd do it. I promise," he finished firmly.

Eddie had finally let his tears fall in the middle of Richie's speech but he did nothing to wipe them, so Richie used his own thumbs to

gently wipe them away. He moved forward and left a lingering kiss on Eddie's forehead and he heard Eddie let out a long, shaky breath.

He pulled back for a few seconds and waited for Eddie to say something. Anything.

Finally, Eddie inhaled deeply and spoke.

"Thirty seconds have passed," he whispered.

He stared into Richie's eyes for a few more seconds, before he gently pulled out of the taller boy's grasp on his face and walked away, leaving Richie by himself again.

Richie didn't even turn to watch him go. He stood there, his hands still hanging in the air where Eddie's face just was.

Richie felt numb.

That was truly the end of their friendship.

Saturday morning, Eddie woke up at 5:00 AM sharp but instead of feeling energized and prepared for the Mathletes State Finals Competition, he felt emotionally drained and exhausted.

This whole week has been great and all, he actually loved regrouping with his former friends on the Mathletes team, but he couldn't help but feel like there was a huge gaping hole in his chest every time he thought of his true best friends.

One person in particular.

Richie was constantly on his mind throughout the entire week. Even though he was pissed as fuck at him, he missed him more than anything.

His heart ached for the tall, beautiful boy. He wanted nothing more than to hug Richie, talk to him, laugh at his stupid jokes. He just wanted to be with Richie.

But, he was still so angry about what happened with his mother's car. He knew Richie didn't mean to make him crash his mother's car, but he still felt anger over the whole situation in genral.

Today was the day he's supposed to be feeling the most ready and energized. He was going to win his team that first place trophy at the competition.

However, as he showered and got dressed, he couldn't help but long for the mornings where Richie would sleepover the night before and they would wake up and get ready for the day together.

Eddie sighed softly, adjusting his hair in the mirror before exiting the restroom and going down to the kitchen to eat breakfast.

His mother was already awake.

"Oh, Eddie! You look dashing! I'm so excited to see you compete today! I knew you would be much better off on this team than you would've ever been with those rotten kids you started hanging out with. Especially that Tozier kid," she said in disgust.

Eddie felt anger boil in his abdomen but he ignored the feeling and forced a smile.

"Thanks, mommy. I'm excited too," he said with a smile, though he knew it was unconvincing.

He quickly ate the breakfast she already had ready for him before letting her know he was leaving.

She pinched his cheeks and he begrudgingly kissed her cheek before walking out of the house and waiting for the bus at the nearest bus stop.

He had to be at the school at 6:00 AM, and they would leave on a school bus from there, all the way to where the competition was. It was at some high school in a town about two hours from Derry.

A bus came screeching to a halt in front of him and he quickly got on and walked to his usual seat in the back.

He missed riding in Richie's dirty truck every morning to school.

He zoned out on the ride to the school, and before he knew it, he saw the entrance of the school coming into his view.

He sighed and walked off the bus and into the school. Once he reached the classroom where all the Mathletes would be, he was quickly pulled into a frenzy of frantic movement and practice problems.

He had no room in his mind to think of anything else but math.

"Alright guys, here we are. We've been spending such a long time preparing for this contest. Remember, don't think about the crowd or the judges. Just think of the numbers and formulas. You guys are going to do so great out there. Eddie, you're leading the team. Bring us some victory," Mr. Russo said excitedly.

The rest of the team smiled and nodded as they stared at Eddie.

Eddie felt his heart burst with happiness at the fact that they were trusting him so much.

They suddenly heard an announcer from the front begin talking to the crowd, beginning the competition.

Eddie and the rest of the team walked out on stage when their school was announced, and Eddie only vaguely heard the sound of the audience cheering for them. He was too nervous.

They stopped at the table set up for them, Eddie closest to the huge whiteboard set up in between the two tables, separating them from their opponents.

Eddie noticed how his opponents stared at them and sneered, giggling and making rude comments underneath their breaths.

Eddie narrowed his eyes at them and felt a newfound confidence run through him.

“Let’s begin,” the announcer said seriously into the microphone.

Eddie quickly snapped his head down to his paper and he gripped his pencil in his hand.

The announcer began reading a problem, and Eddie, just to his luck, knew exactly how to figure it out.

He quickly walked to the whiteboard and began writing down the formula he would need. This problem involved long division. His favorite.

After writing for what felt like forever, he finally wrote down an answer and ran back to his table, hitting his buzzard.

The announcer walked to the board with his card to examine Eddie’s work and answer. After a few seconds, he nodded and held his hand out in Eddie’s direction, signaling a point for their team.

Eddie grinned in delight and he high fived everyone on his team, feeling extremely proud of himself for that problem.

Suddenly, Eddie heard an extremely recognizable voice coming from the audience.

”Yeah! Yes! That’s my Eddie! That’s my Eddie Spaghetti up there!”

Eddie snapped his eyes to the audience and his heart skipped a beat.

There, right in the middle of the audience was Richie clapping and cheering wildly. He put two fingers in his mouth and whistled obnoxiously loud.

Eddie’s mouth dropped open as he watched Richie suddenly lift a sign up in the air that said, “This competition ain’t READY for my EDDIE SPAGHETTI!”

Eddie noticed Bev sitting right next to Richie, also cheering loudly and helping Richie with the massive sign.

Eddie could’ve sworn his heart stopped as he and Richie made direct eye contact.

Richie only smiled softly and gave him a thumbs up.

Eddie continued staring for a few more moments, before his body finally seemed to react. He felt a smile slowly start to grow on his face and he felt his heart burst with affection and adoration towards his two friends.

The announcer glared at Richie and Bev, who were still being obnoxiously loud.

“Quiet in the audience, please. We need to move on.”

Richie and Bev finally hushed, but kept their eyes on Eddie.

Eddie grinned happily at the two of them before he finally looked back down at his paper.

Yeah. Today was gonna rock.

“Both schools today worked very hard and impressed everyone very much. However, with a stellar performance today, the winner of the Mathletes State Finals Competition is….Derry!” The announcer shouted as he held his hand out in their direction.

Eddie felt like he was on cloud nine. He felt arms surrounding him as his team pulled him into a huge group hug. He happily wrapped his arms around all of them.

”I think this is for you and your team, sir. You all did a fabulous job today. Congratulations,” The announcer said as he held out the huge first place trophy in Eddie’s direction.

Eddie grabbed it and held it up in the air while laughing. His teammates and Mr. Russo all cheered at the sight.

Eddie realized that this was the last competition of the year for the Mathletes. The thought made him a little sad but he was mostly happy that he at least got to help them win that last competition. Besides, maybe he’d even stay on the team next year.

Eddie heard that loud, obnoxious whistle again. He turned and saw Bev standing where she had been sitting, shouting Eddie's name and waving him over.

Eddie happily handed the trophy over to his teammates and ran over to Bev. He immediately jumped into her arms and she lifted him up and twirled him around.

"You were amazing, Eddie! I had no idea you were that awesome in math! Be my tutor! The lord knows I need one!" She shouted excitedly, causing Eddie to laugh.

Bev's face suddenly softened.

"Eddie, I'm really sorry. For everything. I just - I miss you so much. We all do. We love you," she said softly while staring into his eyes.

Eddie smiled at her.

"Well, I suppose I could just this one time....forgive you," he teased.

Bev's face lit up and she wrapped her arms around him again and hugged him tightly.

"Oh, good. Thank you, Eddie. So does this mean -"

Eddie quickly nodded.

"Yeah, I miss you guys so much. I'm not sitting anywhere else other than the Losers Club table ever again," he said.

Bev somehow grinned even bigger and laughed.

"Good. We're more than ready to welcome you back," she said before her eyes moved to somewhere behind Eddie.

Eddie was about to turn around himself to see what she was looking at when Bev suddenly smirked at Eddie.

"I have to use the restroom," she said, though Eddie knew for a fact she was lying.

However, Bev quickly turned away and walked off in the general direction of the restrooms.

Eddie stared after her for a few moments.

”Eddie,” a voice said from behind Eddie.

Eddie came face to face with Richie, who was staring intently at him with a genuine grin on his face.

Eddie blushed and glanced down at his feet.

”Hi Richie,” he managed to say quietly.

Richie coughed awkwardly and held out a bouquet of red roses that Eddie just noticed he had been holding.

”These are uh....these are for you,” Richie said shyly.

Eddie stared down at them for a few seconds before taking them gently.

He closed his eyes and sniffed them. Red roses. His favorite flower.

”They’re beautiful. Thank you so much,” Eddie said honestly.

Richie simply nodded, but kept staring at Eddie with that same intense stare that made Eddie want to melt.

”Look, Eddie. I just want you to know that -“

“I love you, too.”

Richie suddenly froze and his mouth dropped open as he took in what Eddie just said.

”Y-you do?” He asked.

Eddie slowly nodded and before he knew it, he was smiling and giggling as he nodded his head faster and with more confidence.

Richie’s entire face lit up and he wrapped his arms around Eddie waist, lifting him in the air and spinning him around just like Bev

had just done.

Eddie smiled and laughed in delight as he wrapped his arms around Richie's neck. They made eye contact as they pulled back a little bit.

"Eddie, you were amazing up there. I'm so proud of you," Richie said honestly.

Eddie's heart felt full and he realized hat he had never felt so joyful in his life.

"It was all for you, Trashmouth," he said and with some new found confidence, he found himself tangling his free hand into Richie's curls, tugging him forward and pressing their lips together.

It was a passionate kiss that Richie quickly responded to. He cupped Eddie's face with both of his massive hands and kissed him with a fiery passion, that Eddie couldn't help but hang on to.

Their lips battled for dominance, both of them trying to throw every ounce of love they had for each other into that kiss.

Finally, their lips separated but they pressed their foreheads together, silently staring at each other.

"I love you, Eds."

Eddie smiled, melting at the nickname.

"I love you too, Rich."

Richie pressed one more peck to his lips.

"I've missed you," Richie said softly.

Eddie gently kissed Richie's forehead.

"Well, good. Because now you're not going to get rid of me very easily," Eddie teased.

Richie giggled, and Eddie decided that, that sound was now his favorite sound in the whole world.

”I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

Author's Note:

> There you guys have it! I was originally planning on this being only 3k words but I ended up writing more and more and it literally ended up being about 9,400 instead. I really hope you all enjoyed it! Comments and feedback are welcome! Thanks! :)